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DAWN

President signs bill resetting COAS' tenure after new role

Three amendment bills related to armed forces now become laws

Dawn Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday gave his assent to three bills, including one for resetting the tenure of Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir after his appointment as the chief of the defence forces (CDF).

The president gave his assent to the Pakistan Army (Amendment) Bill 2025, the Pakistan Air Force (Amendment) Bill 2025, and the Pakistan Navy (Amendment) Bill 2025. Notifications of the same were also shared by the PPP on social media platform X.

With his assent, all the three bills have now become laws.

As explained by Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar in the National Assembly (NA) earlier this week, it now means that the five-year tenure of the CDF will commence from the date of his notification of the appointment.

All three pieces of legislation, which were hurriedly passed by Parliament without any debate earlier this week, pertain to the contentious 27th Amendment.

The amendment, which has paved the way for the establishment of a Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) and changes to the military leadership structure, has been heavily criticised by the opposition.

Under the new changes made to the Army Act, the expression "chief of the army staff" will be replaced with "chief of the defence forces" as per the 27th Amendment. Similarly, the expression "Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee" (CJCSC) will be replaced with the "commander of the National Strategic Command".

Further, changes have been made to Section 8A of the Pakistan Army Act 1952, saying that "provided that for the first appointment of the chief of the army staff concurrently the chief of the defence forces under paragraph (a) of Clause 4 of the Article 243 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the tenure under this section shall commence from the date of notification of the said office".

Another change pertains to the appointment of commander of the National Strategic Command says, "The prime minister may, on the recommendation of the chief of the army staff concurrently the chief of the defence forces, appoint the commander of the National Strategic Command, from amongst generals in the Pakistan Army, for a tenure of three years." The proposed amendment also authorises the prime minister to "reappoint the commander…for additional tenure of three years and/or extend the tenure(s)…up to three years" on the recommendations of the CDF.

Under the changes, the appointment, reappointment or extension of the commander of the National Strategic Command, or the "exercise of discretion by the appointing authority in this regard, shall not be called into question before any court on any ground whatsoever".

Further, the federal government may, on the recommendation of the army chief and concurrently the CDF and by order in writing, "authorise the officer appointed as vice chief of the army staff or deputy chief of the army staff to exercise and perform such of the powers and functions vested in the chief of the army staff under any law, rules, regulations, orders or instructions for the time being in force as may be so specified".

Meanwhile, the changes to the air force and navy laws include the elimination of the post of CJCSC from their documents.

Naqvi blames 'across the border' elements for terrorism

• Says no religion sanctioned attacks on children • Lauds bravery of security personnel for thwarting attack

By A.K. Wazir

LOWER SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday paid a visit to the Cadet College Wana in Lower South Waziristan, where an attack was thwarted earlier this week, saying that elements from "across the border" were responsible for terrorism in the country.

The minister said the attackers intended to stage a tragedy similar to the 2014 Army Public School (APS) Peshawar carnage, but the "swift and courageous response" of the security personnel thwarted their attempt. He remarked that the assailants were not merely terrorists, but "brutal monsters devoid of humanity", adding that no religion sanctioned attacks on children.

He later met the cadets and teachers, who were present in the college at the time of the attack, and praised their courage and composure under extreme pressure.

INTERIOR Minister Mohsin Naqvi visits the damaged building of Cadet College Wana.—Dawn

Mr Naqvi also met Pakistan Army and Frontier Corps Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (South) personnel and commended their bravery in foiling the attack and rescuing hundreds of cadets and staff members in the process. He reiterated that the government stood firmly behind the armed forces in the ongoing fight against terrorism.

Inspector General FC South, Maj Gen Mehar Omar Khan Niazi, briefed the minister on the sequence of events and the security operation that followed. Mr Naqvi was later taken to the affected locations and shown the points targeted by the terrorists.

On the occasion, Mr Naqvi asked the authorities concerned to ensure immediate repair and restoration of the institution.

The minister's visit boosted the morale of the cadets and teachers, and helped restore confidence among local residents, who have been shaken by the region's deteriorating security situation.

'Afghan nationals'

According to the officials, investigations into the attack revealed that all the militants involved in the assault were Afghan nationals. The planning of the attack, along with weapons and other equipment, was facilitated from inside Afghanistan, while the final operational instructions were issued by Noor Wali Mehsud, the leader of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the sources said,

It added that the responsibility for the attack was claimed under a new name, "Jaish-ul-Hind", in an attempt to conceal the identity of the actual network.

Fazl addresses clerics in Dhaka

By Kalbe Ali

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman called for stronger ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh on Sunday, telling a large religious gathering that a shared "unity of faith was a stronger bond between the two nations that cannot be abolished".

The JUI-F chief was addressing the Khatm-e-Nabuwwat conference at Suhrawardy Ground in Dhaka. "The people of Bangladesh possessed a strong and dynamic spirit of activism, but religious movements stood for continuity and stability at the ideology not violence," he said. Maulana Fazl emphasised that the delegation from Pakistan had not come merely to attend the event but to convey a message of goodwill from the Pakistani people to their Bangladeshi brethren. Focusing on the conference's central theme of the finality of prophethood, Maulana Fazl underscored a core shared belief.

"We the Muslims of Pakistan and Bangladesh are part of a single Ummah," he said, adding that scholars across the subcontinent are united in the belief that anyone claiming prophethood after Prophet Muhammad is outside the fold of Islam.

The JUI-F chief also expressed hope that the conference would serve as a catalyst for strengthening relations and cooperation across various sectors.

He pledged that "if Bangladesh took one step forward, Pakistan would take two", and asserted that "mutual goodwill and affection would continue to grow stronger between the two countries".

Participants were also seen carrying Palestinian flags during the event.

Pakistan, WHO partner to draft action plan for child safety

Consultations underway to protect 112m minors against various abuses

ISLAMABAD: The World Health Organisation (WHO) and Ministry of Human Rights have launched consultations to prepare a national Strategic Action Plan on Violence Against Children, aiming to strengthen prevention and protect the country's 112 million children.

The initiative addresses multiple forms of violence against children in Pakistan, including killings, physical and sexual violence, psychological abuse, and neglect. The plan comes as the country faces challenges where only one in three children under five is registered at birth and over 12.5 million are involved in child labour.

The consultations, which included experts, partners, participants from all provinces and self-governed areas, began in Karachi last week and concluded in Islamabad.

The new strategy will be grounded in the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the INSPIRE framework, an evidence-based package developed by international agencies under WHO's leadership. According to a WHO statement, the framework outlines seven strategies focused on laws, norms, safe environments, caregiver support, financial stability, response services, and life skills, which have proven effective in reducing violence against children.

"We recognise that fragmented efforts must now evolve into a cohesive, national, multi-sectoral strategy, one that mobilises education, health, law enforcement, and community systems together," Federal Secretary for the Ministry of Human Rights Abdul Khalique Shaikh said. "The strategy will provide that unified vision, with measurable targets, clear institutional responsibilities, and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework."

The lack of birth registration creates significant gaps in protection, leaving many children vulnerable. Displaced, migrant and those in poor urban settlements face high risks of exploitation, early marriage, trafficking and child labour. —Ikram Junaidi

PTI slams article against Imran as 'recycled propaganda'

• Says report relies on 'half-truths, innuendo and selective outrage' • Demands writers, publication issue immediate public apology

By Ikram Junaidi and Umer Farooq

ISLAMABAD/PESHAWAR: As *The Economist*'s article on former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi continues to circulate widely and spark debate across the country, the PTI has claimed that it contains nothing more than "recycled propaganda" masquerading as foreign commentary, and demanded that the writers and the publication issue an immediate public apology.

The report examined the PTI founder's marriage to Bushra Bibi and her alleged influence on his decision-making as prime minister, among other issues.

In an official response issued by the PTI media wing on Saturday, the party alleged that co-writer Bushra Taskeen was a known critic of the PTI and that the "so-called" analysis published in *The Economist* was aimed at justifying political victimisation while favouring the PML-N, calling into question the objectivity of this analysis.

The party further said it reserved the right to initiate legal action against all parties involved — including the writers and *The Economist* — should they fail to issue an immediate, full and public apology.

"We have seen this narrative play out before: half-truths, innuendo, selective outrage, all packaged and presented as 'objective analysis'. This attempt to misrepresent facts is not intended to inform Pakistan or its people, but rather to justify political victimisation and distract attention from real crises about human rights violations, economic collapse, constitutional violations and systematically stolen elections," the statement said.

"What is most striking is the convenient targeting of Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi, who have been incarcerated for two years and three months, while the article remains silent on what has been happening in Pakistan for the last three years and seven months. There is no mention of human rights violations, the rigged elections confirmed even by Commonwealth observers, the hundreds of PTI supporters who have recently been handed 10-year sentences in fabricated cases, or the systematic political persecution the party has faced," the statement said.

The PTI said the Al Qadri Trust case, frequently cited in the article, was ongoing and had not been "fixed" as implied.

"PTI has consistently sought transparency and judicial resolution. The Constitution itself has been repeatedly tampered with in fear of Imran Khan, undermining the rule of law. One must ask the writers why they did not highlight these grave concerns and instead chose to sensationalise the personal life of the PTI leader," the party stated.

"Imran Khan's own trials are far from open and fair. They are being conducted inside prison, denying him his basic rights, including meetings with family, friends and legal counsel, despite explicit court orders," the statement concluded.

Political propaganda

Meanwhile, KP CM's special assistant on information Shafiullah Jan said *The Economist*'s report was baseless, political propaganda, and would be pursued on international forums. In a statement, he also refuted the claim made in the report that Bushra Bibi interfered in government affairs, calling it baseless.

He added that official records of meetings — including those of the federal cabinet, Economic Coordination Committee, National Security Committee and parliamentary proceedings — were available, and that no government official or institution had ever complained about such interference.

The CM's aide said the PML-N was so terrified of Mr Khan that it staged "daily dramas", adding that people had rejected the party, which was why the government was using journalism for its "nefarious designs" against the PTI.